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Syrians vote on new constitution in thick of unrest

DAMASCUS (AFP) - Syrians voted Sunday on a new constitution in the face of opposition calls for a boycott and deadly violence that Washington has said made the exercise "laughable."

US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton warned, meanwhile, there was "every possibility" that Syria could descend into a civil war which could be worsened by foreign intervention.

The new text ends the legal basis for the five-decade stranglehold on power of the ruling Baath party but leaves huge powers in the hands of President Bashar al-Assad.

The opposition says the changes are cosmetic and that

only Assad's ouster will suffice after 11 months of repression by his security forces that human rights groups say have left more than 7,600 people dead.

On Sunday, the opposition Syrian National Council, extended a hand to Assad's Alawite community, warning that the regime was attempting to "drive a wedge" between religious groups, assuring the minority group they will always be an "important component of Syria."

As polling was under way, a Britain-based watchdog reported new violence around the country that left at least 17 civilians and 16 security force personnel dead.

Morning News reporter Rosalie Klein contracted by U.S. publishing company to write the Moon Handbook Aruba

THE MORNING NEWS is proud to announce that principal staff reporter/photographer Rosalie Klein has signed a contract with Avalon Travel, part of the Perseus Books Group of New York, to write the latest addition to their stable of popular guide books, The Moon Aruba Handbook.

Avalon Travel is based out of San Francisco and publishes several series of travel guides, including The Dog Lover's Companion and Road Trip USA. Their Moon Handbook travel guides "have for more than 30 years appealed to an eclectic group of travelers, from backpacking students to solo adventurers to families on vacation (and a budget) - with expert writers delivering a mix of honest insight, first-rate strategic advice, and an essential dose of humor."

Moon travel books come in 7 different series, from in-depth advice for vacationers to handy tips for living abroad from the U.S. Among them are specific guides for camping, major cities around the world and they have a digital series for the Kindle, iPhone and Nook. Their full line of Moon Handbooks and others editions can be viewed at www.moon.com.

Moon Handbooks are meant to be in-depth guides for the "adventurous and budget minded," and the Aruba Moon Handbook will be their first such venture into the southern and eastern Caribbean; major regional destinations such as Jamaica, Dominican Republic, Virgin Islands, Cuba and Puerto



THE MORNING NEWS reporter Rosalie Klein in action

Rico are among the titles in their roster. Aruba is the first Caribbean nation selected beyond these to merit a Moon Handbook, with researchers finding sufficient interest in the island as a destination to invest in publishing a guide.

Avalon Publishing representatives contacted the Aruba Tourism Authority in 2011 for recommendations of local writers; Rosalie was among a number advised to reply to the publishing company if they were interested in authoring the book. "As a long time resident of Aruba, first working directly in tourism for over 20 years and then in island media, I saw this as a wonderful opportunity to share the wealth of information I have of things the casual visitor never discovers," she observes.

"All the questions I had been asked repeatedly by vacationers over the years could now be answered in print. I saw this as an exciting opportunity to advise them on many of the great restaurants, services and fascinating sights "beyond the beach," along with island culture, which is exactly what Moon Handbooks are all about."

Continue on pg 3

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PALMARUBA condominiums partners with 15 island realtors



Jan Falcone from Aruba Palms Realtors signs up

PALMARUBA Managing Director Victor Acosta welcomed owners and representatives of Aruba's most prestigious real estate companies for an orientation meeting on Thursday evening, February 23, regarding the island's newest, innovative condominium project, PALMARUBA.

Mr. Acosta, a veteran developer known for such successful communities as Palma Real and Oceania, enthusiastically enlightened the agents about the cozy new complex that will be conveniently located between Palma Real and Caribbean Mercantile Bank in Palm Beach.

The realtors were already committed to representing PALMARUBA, and even more so after absorbing the details of this 76-unit facility which will include such amenities as tennis court, fitness and game rooms, restaurant, concierge services, solar panels and 24-hour security. Consisting of three five-story buildings and a social center, the upper levels will offer lovely vistas of the Caribbean Sea, while the location provides easy access to Aruba's most demanded attractions and convenient shopping. They were very impressed with the price structure, and a number commented "this will be an easy sell at these prices, particularly for what they offering." Other vital



Milouska Briezen from Miko Sales & Rental Services Signs up

services, such as maid, babysitting and catering for special parties, as well as rental of the condo when not in use, can be arranged through the PALMARUBA Management services.

The spacious, affordable units range from a 1 bedroom/bath of 76 sq meters to luxurious 3 bed/bath penthouses of 224 sq meters. Full floor plans and schematics can be viewed on the PALMARUBA website: www.palmaruba.com. Interested parties seeking something out of the ordinary should check out the "Sugar Palm" design featuring a master bedroom and bath in a duplex loft, for privacy and a remarkable view; this singular design particularly caught realtors' interest.

The orientation session ended with the finalization of the realtor's contracts and an awarding of certificates proclaiming them official representatives of PALMARUBA, along with goodies bags filled with detailed information.

The following real estate agencies are now qualified to respond to inquiries and sell this very attractive



Realtor Muna Habash with the PalmAruba Girls



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Freeland realtors are: Rixie Cohen, Leo Samson and George Palm.

By Rosalie Klein



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Morning News reporter Rosalie Klein contracted by U.S. publishing company ...

Continued from pg 1

A lengthy winnowing-down process resulted in the formal signing of a contract on February 22 to deliver a manuscript by August 15, 2012 for a complete 300-page travel guide, with an eye towards it being issued by the end of the first quarter of 2013.

"As a long-time resident, former scuba instructor, and local journalist, Rosalie has the insider knowledge and strong connection to Aruba that made her the ideal candidate to write Moon Aruba," commented an Avalon spokesperson, "At Moon Travel Guides, we always strive to give readers the information they need to have a more genuine experience of



Moon Handbooks, and now one for Aruba

a place, and from our first conversation, Rosalie was already talking about wanting to encourage people to explore beyond the resorts and see the local side of the is-

land. Rosalie also has such an infectious enthusiasm for Aruba -- she is brimming with ideas and advice, and after talking with her, it's hard not to feel like just drop-

ping everything and booking a trip."

Despite more than 32 years living on Aruba, Rosalie acknowledges the fluid nature of the island's tourism industry, with new restaurants, shows, services and out-of-ordinary accommodations cropping up regularly. She welcomes input from island visitors and residents in regards to their personal discoveries or services offered, and invites those with worthwhile information to contact her at: rosaliemoonguide@yahoo.com about a great find or something new that will be avail-

able by the deadline.

"We are very proud and not the least surprised that Rosalie was singled out from the candidates to author the Moon Aruba guide," expressed MORNING NEWS editors Chandette Richardson and Rosalinda Maduro. "We are well aware of her talent and creativity as a writer and photographer and how her work has enhanced the content of our newspaper, and we are proud to have her on our team. It was very exciting when she informed us of the possibility; we had no doubt she would be the one chosen to author the book."

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Hospital nurses being professionally upgraded



Last September 2011, the Aruba Dr. Horacio E. Oduber Hospital began offering a special educational course combining the Emergency Unit and the Intensive Care Unit. The purpose of the course is to educate 12 of their nurses to equip them professionally for work in the Emergency Unit and the ICU. These 12 nurses just completed their very first exam. The exam was done online and covered the topic of Cardiology. The results of the exam were exceptionally good.

The combined educational program was conducted together with the Amstel Academie, which is one of the prestigious intitutes of the Vrije Universiteit of Amsterdam.

In the new curriculum there is a component called "Clinical Reasoning" and "Educational Competency." These are the areas that is believed to specifically upgrade, enhance and professionalize the level of study and competency of those working in the Emer-

gency Unit and in the ICU. The study program will guarantee expert and optimal care to patients from these nurses.

The two-year study program is being coordinated and directed by the educational department of the Hospital in corporation with teachers of nursing working in these departments. Medical specialists and teachers from the Amstel Acedemy of Holland will also be part of the teaching staff.

The "Zorgopleiding Unit" of the Hospital is excited about the course and wishes all the students in the program great success. They expect theses students to become experts who will be able to provide superb care to our patients



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US comic Maher gives \$1 million to Obama super PAC

LOS ANGELES (AFP) - US comedian Bill Maher has donated \$1 million to a Democratic super PAC supporting President Barack Obama's re-election campaign.

Maher announced the donation to Priorities USA Action last week, saying

"having a country governed by Barack Obama rather than any of the Republican candidates" was "worth a million dollars," his spokeswoman said.

"This is the wisest investment I think I could make," he said during a live-stream

video show, urging other wealthy liberals to do the same and "give until it hurts," according to the publicist.

Tweeting after the Yahoo online comedy show "CrazyStupidPolitics," Maher joked: "Most important advice I ever got in show

business, as true today as then: always bring ur wallet onstage."

"Thank u everybody who's hit me up after the show, and a great San Jose audience. Obama donation was a surprise to Yahoo too fyi!" he added.



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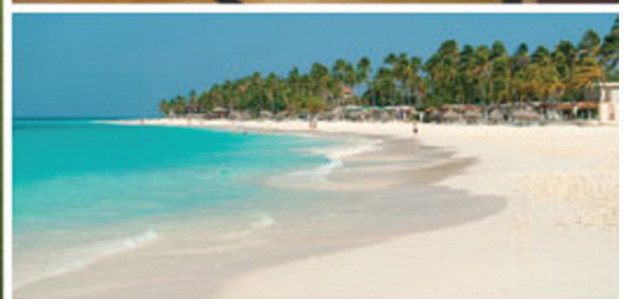
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Join in beach volleyball action for a good cause this coming Sunday



Michelle Begin poses with her tournament's poster



The La Cabana/Tropicana Resort beachfront will be the site for some great fun and fundraising this coming Sunday, March 4, with the inaugural charity tournament organized by "Ms Canada," long-time visitor Michelle Begin, from Ottawa, Canada. She earned her nickname by her enthusiasm for involving herself in local events and participating as the Aruban Resort Carnival Queen in past parades.

Michelle has been spending around 5 weeks wintering on Aruba for well over 20 years, and her desire to "give back" to the island where she has made so many dear friends, resulted in her organizing this fundraising volleyball tournament, which promises to be a great day of fun in the sun; she hope to see it become an annual event. There will be handsome trophies awarded to the winners.

She already has 14 teams signed up, and is looking for 2 more 8-player teams to register. Fee for participation is \$100 per person, of which

100% will go to Ambiente Feliz, a home for the intellectually challenged.

Michelle has also received some donations of valuable jewelry from vendors such as Queen's Jewelers and Diamante, and these items will be raffled off. Tickets are on sale for \$10 per ticket, \$25 when you buy 3.

Even if you don't care to play, Balashi is providing

beer and soft drinks, and Senor Frog's will have tasty snacks for sale, and all monies raised from the sale of refreshments will also be donated to the foundation. It will be an entertaining day for a worthy cause, beginning at 11:00 AM until 5:00 PM.

For more information and to register to play call Michelle at 564-3179.

By Rosalie Klein

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TUESDAY AND FRIDAY: LIVE MUSIC

International News

Loss of Antarctic base deals Brazil a major blow

SAO PAULO (AFP) - The destruction of Brazil's Antarctic base in a fire that killed two navy personnel has dealt a major blow to the country's strategic research on the resource-rich continent, experts say.

"All the central core of the base, where the installations were concentrated, was lost. The exact extent of what occurred still needs to be determined, but the assessment is that we really lost virtually everything," Defense Minister Celso Amorim said late Saturday.

Brazilian experts painted a grim picture of the damage after Saturday's blaze, which swept through a room housing energy generators of Brazil's Comandante Ferraz research base located in Admiralty Bay, King George Island, near the tip of the Antarctic Peninsula.

The base, which was established in 1984, conducts biological science research focused on coastal and shelf marine ecosystems.

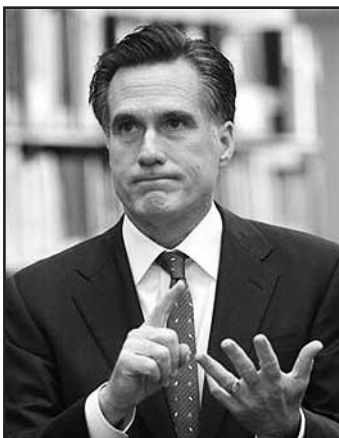
Meanwhile, a Brazilian Air Force C-130 Hercules aircraft was to pick up 45 evacuees from the base -- 32 civilians, 12 navy personnel and the injured navy man -- in Punta Arenas, Chile.

The Brazilian Navy said the aircraft was due to land at the Galeao air base near Rio around midnight after dropping four scientists in Pelotas in Rio Grande do Sul state.

In a statement, it also said that roughly 70 percent of the installations at the base was destroyed by the fire.

Shelters for isolated emergency modules along with laboratories, fuel tanks and the helipad -- which are isolated from the main building -- remained intact, it added.

Romney says double primary win would be 'huge'



WASHINGTON (AFP) - Republican White House hopeful Mitt Romney talked up his chances Sunday ahead of two critical primary contests, saying he expected a "huge" double win that would catapult him towards the nomination.

But the fact that either of Tuesday's votes, in supposed Romney strongholds Michigan and Arizona, is in play actually reflects how tight the Republican nomination battle to take

on President Barack Obama in November has become.

Rick Santorum, a staunch Christian conservative, is surging after a trio of wins in Minnesota, Missouri and Colorado earlier this month and is now leading the former Massachusetts governor in national polls of Republican voters.

Santorum, a former Pennsylvania senator, has launched a strong challenge in Michigan, where Romney was born and his father was governor, and in Arizona, where a significant proportion of the electorate share Romney's Mormon faith.

But polls in the past week have showed Romney steadily eating away at Santorum's lead in Michigan -- the two are now locked in a virtual tie in the Midwestern state -- and suggest Romney could be pulling clear in Arizona.

"I'm planning on winning here in Michigan and also in Arizona," Romney told "Fox News Sunday." "Obviously, that will be huge for us if we're able to do (so), particularly having come from so far behind here in Michigan."

The candidates face a po-

tentially decisive stretch in a presidential campaign that has seen several rivals emerge to challenge Romney, the default frontrunner, only to fall back in the full glare of the media spotlight.

After Tuesday, Washington state votes on March 3. Ten states then vote at once on "Super Tuesday" on March 6, when almost one fifth of all the vital convention delegates are up for grabs.

The other two main candidates, former House speaker Newt Gingrich and small-government champion congressman Ron Paul, a veteran Texas congressman, trail significantly in national polls.

All four candidates have vowed to stay in the race all the way to the party convention at the end of August, when a result might have to be brokered behind the scenes if no one reaches the magic number of 1,144 delegates.

Romney, a multi-millionaire businessman and former governor of Massachusetts, leads in terms of the number of pledged delegates, having won important states such as New Hampshire, Florida and Nevada.

Mandela leaves hospital with 'nothing seriously wrong'



JOHANNESBURG (AFP) - Nelson Mandela was given a clean bill of health and left hospital Sunday after a minor diagnostic procedure, soothing fears over the beloved South African nonagenarian's health.

The former president was hospitalised Saturday for a keyhole operation to investigate persistent abdominal discomfort, raising alarms about the man revered as the symbol of South Africa's post-apartheid reconciliation.

"The doctors have decided to send him home as the diagnostic procedure

he underwent did not indicate anything seriously wrong with him," President Jacob Zuma's office said in a statement. Presidency spokesman Harold Maloka said Mandela, 93, was recovering at home in the leafy Johannesburg suburb of Houghton, where he returned last month from his childhood village in the Eastern Cape, some 800 kilometres (500 miles) from the country's economic hub.

"He is resting with family," Maloka told AFP. Mandela underwent a diagnostic laparoscopy, a procedure in which doctors make small incisions in the abdomen to probe it with a tiny camera.

Shortly before his discharge was announced, Zuma said Mandela, known affectionately as Madiba, was relaxed and comfortable after his night's stay in hospital and was surrounded by his family.

"The doctors have assured us that there is nothing to worry about and that Madiba is in good health," Zuma said.



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International News

US advisors shot in Afghan ministry 'after Koran row'



KABUL (AFP) - Two US advisors who were shot dead in Afghanistan's interior ministry by an Afghan colleague had been mocking anti-US protests over the burning of the Koran, a government source said Sunday.

The description of events - which led to NATO pulling all its advisors out of Afghan government ministries -- came amid renewed violence in a sixth day of anti-American demonstrations.

A protester was killed and seven US soldiers were wounded in a grenade attack on their base as France announced its Kabul embassy was temporarily withdrawing all its civilian mentors and advisors from Afghan institutions for "safety reasons".

Germany also said it had withdrawn its national and international staff from Afghan ministries as a "precautionary measure".

Describing the sequence of events that led to the interior ministry shootings, the source said the US advisors were "scolding the protesters and calling them bad names", as they watched videos of protests in Kabul.

"They called the Koran a bad book in the presence of

(an Afghan colleague). After all this the guy had verbal arguments with the advisors and was threatened by them. He gets angry and shoots them. Eight rounds were fired at them," the source added, requesting anonymity.

"He then sneaks out and disappears. No one knew about the incident for more than an hour because the room is soundproofed," he said, adding that CCTV cameras had been viewed in the investigation of the shooting.

Government sources said police were hunting for an Afghan intelligence official suspected of killing the two Americans, while the interior ministry confirmed that "the suspect is one of the employees of the ministry and he is at large".

Local television quoted a source which named the suspect as 25-year-old Abdul Saibor, who had studied in Pakistan and joined the ministry as a driver in 2007 before being promoted.

Sunday's grenade attack came during an anti-US protest in northern Kunduz province over the burning of Korans in an incinerator pit at the Bagram airbase, police said.

In the neighbouring province of Samangan, two protesters were wounded during a one-hour demonstration in Aybak city, provincial governor Khairullah Anosh told AFP, but there were no reports of unrest elsewhere in Afghanistan.

The latest death brings the total toll in six days of demonstrations since the Koran burning to more than 30.

President Hamid Karzai went on television Sunday to appeal for calm.

Karzai "condemned with

the strongest words" the treatment of Islam's holy book and said the perpetrators should be punished, but told his countrymen: "Now that we have shown our feelings it is time to be calm and peaceful."

He said he respected the emotions of Afghans upset by the Koran burning, but urged them not to let "the enemies of Afghanistan misuse their feelings".

Taliban insurgents have called on Afghans to kill foreign troops in revenge for the incident, and claimed to have been behind the shooting deaths of the two US advisors in the interior ministry in Kabul.

NATO, which has a 130,000-strong US-led military force fighting the Taliban insurgency, has advisors throughout the Afghan government but commanding officer General John Allen ordered them all to be withdrawn.

Colombia's FARC vows to end civilian kidnappings

BOGOTA (AFP) - Colombia's FARC, the country's largest left-wing rebel group, vowed Sunday to free 10 remaining police and military hostages and to end once and for all its practice of kidnapping civilians.

"We wish to announce that in addition to our already announced plans to free six prisoners of war, we will free the four others who remain under our power," the group said in a statement published on its website.

Plans to free the hostages, who have been held for more than a decade, were announced by the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) rebels on their www.farc-ep.co site.

The communique said the group planned to "outlaw the practice" of civilian kidnapping, which for decades it had used as a way to raise revenue, saying the tactic was no longer seen as compatible with "our revolutionary activity."

The statement, dated February 26, and signed by the Central Secretariat of the FARC, said "serious obstacles" still remain to the conclusion of a peace agreement with the Colombian government.

Earlier this month, the rebel group had postponed an earlier decision to free a half-dozen military and police hostages, citing military movements in the area where the captives were held.

Founded in 1964, the FARC is holding at least 10 police and soldiers hostage with the goal of trading them for several hundred imprisoned guerrillas. They also are holding an unknown number of civilians for ransom.

The FARC has come under increasing pressure to free their hostages with protests erupting nationwide after four rebel prisoners were allegedly killed by their captors on November 26 when a rebel camp came under attack.

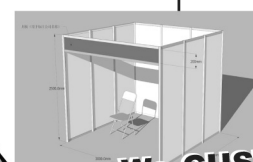
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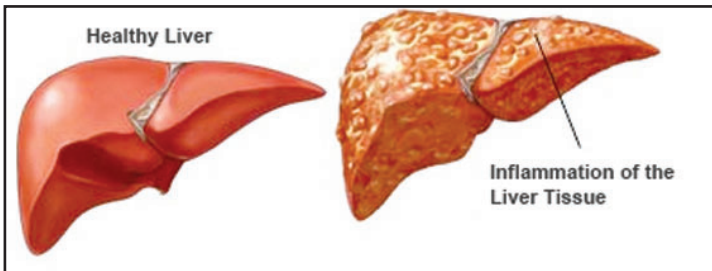


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Health & Living

Hepatitis C kills more Americans than HIV: study



WASHINGTON (AFP)—More Americans died in 2007 of hepatitis C infection, which causes incurable liver disease, than from the virus that causes AIDS, US health authorities said this week.

More than 15,000 people died of hepatitis C infection in 2007, compared to 12,734 who died from HIV-related causes, said the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention data, published in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*.

Prior to 2007, human immunodeficiency virus was more deadly than hepatitis C, which often causes no symptoms and can be passed between injected drug users, or people who have unprotected sex with a hepatitis C infected partner.

About 1.5 percent of the US population is infected with hepatitis C, making it one of the most common causes of chronic liver disease in the

United States today, according to the US National Library of Medicine.

The disease can cause cirrhosis of the liver and liver cancer.

Treatments to remove the virus from the blood include weekly injections of pegylated interferon alfa, and a twice daily capsule called Ribavarin. However there is no vaccine to prevent hepatitis C.

Researchers said the shift in mortality rates is largely due to the success of treating HIV.

"The decrease in deaths from HIV infection in the past decades reflects the availability and utilization of highly effective therapies, as well as effective national implementation of programs for prevention and care," said the study.

"A similar approach to HBV and HCV prevention might lead to similar reductions in mortality from viral hepatitis over time."



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Sunburnt Australia to pull plug on sunbed tans

SYDNEY (AFP) - Jay Allen used to love having what he thought was a healthy tan -- so much so that he would regularly expose his body to the lights of a sunbed to ensure he maintained his overall colour.

But after one session he noticed a small mole on his ankle was bleeding and at his wife's insistence, he went to the doctor. He was told he had a skin cancer which could kill him if he didn't have it removed.

"I thought it was a good thing," he said of using a solarium. "I thought it was going to

be safer in the sunbed than laying out in the sun for an hour. It turns out it nearly cost me my life."

Australia is known as the sunburnt country, where beaches are thronged with bathers basking in the sun and the rates of melanoma, a potentially fatal form of skin cancer, are the highest in the world.

For decades public health campaigns have urged people to wear sunscreen, hats and sunglasses and avoid the sun during the hottest part of the day, but now they say even tanning on a sunbed is not safe and must be banned.

The country's most populous state New South Wales has taken the strongest line so far, saying commercial solariums will become illegal in three years, given mounting evidence that the use of sunbeds is linked to increased melanoma risk.

Recent research suggests that the use of sunbeds by people aged 18 to 39 increases their risk of developing melanoma, the most common form of cancer among young Australians, by an average of 41 percent.

The main cause of skin cancer is exposure to UV radiation, from the sun and other sources such as sunbeds, in genetically predisposed people, with more than 1,200 people dying from the disease here each year.

Ian Olver from the Cancer Council of Australia said it was a myth that sunbeds were a safe way to tan, adding that they were capable of delivering more energy -- up to five times more -- than the midday sun in summer.

"The fact is, it's UV light,

and if you absorb enough UV light to turn your skin brown then you've actually done enough damage to trigger not only skin cancer, but premature ageing later on," he said.

"There isn't a safe form of tanning by UV light."

Olver said while there were medical uses for UV treatment, you do not get the benefits when you damage the skin.

Allen hopes that banning sunbeds in New South Wales will send a clear message that there is no place for indoor tanning.

"Just be pale. You don't have to get that tanned look, it's not that important," he said.



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Sci-Tech

S. African officials use Twitter for Mandela news



SOUTH AFRICA (AFP) - Nelson Mandela's health scares send Twitter into overdrive, but South African officials made savvy use of social media to keep the world informed on the global icon's latest medical woe.

The presidency used Facebook and Twitter to tell the public that "Madiba," as he is

affectionately known, had been admitted on Saturday, and later to assure an increasingly worried world that he was not in danger.

"It's a sign of a modern government embracing a modern era. The government has been more organised this time, and their social media activities are an example of that," Matthew Buckland, publisher of South African technology trend site Memeburn, told AFP.

The efforts did not go unnoticed by a nation that increasingly uses smartphones and the Internet.

"Get well soon Mr Madiba, tanx 4 informing us Mr President," applauded a Facebook poster in typically casual social media lingo.

The detail-hungry media has offered praise but also criticism. As officials refused to say where Mandela was hospitalised or divulge exact details, unconfirmed reports that he had undergone hernia surgery flowed furiously.

"Last time it was a mess," wrote BBC correspondent Andrew Harding on the British broadcaster's website on Saturday.

"This time the presidency has been ahead of the social media rumours that fuelled much of the confusion in 2011, but the instinct to deny, rather than to say 'no comment,' remains strong, and as before, impatient and contradictory speculation has started to emerge."

France works with Microsoft to cultivate startups

PARIS (AFP) - French minister Frederic Lefebvre and Microsoft n Saturday announced a partnership to cultivate promising Internet startups in France.

The US technology titan will work with the agency for the creation of enterprises (l'APCE) headed by Alain Belais to identify young French companies to join a Microsoft BizSpark program, Lefebvre said in a release.

The program will provide selected startups with Windows Azure storage capacity and free access to software offered by Microsoft as services in the Internet "cloud," according to Lefebvre.

French Internet startups with "high growth potential" will be eligible to get two years worth of online services from Microsoft.

The development of small and medium enterprises in vital "to support innovation, value creation and employment in France," according to Lefebvre.

Microsoft vice president for emerging business development Dan'l Lewin said in the release that the partnership fits with the Redmond, Washington-based company's strategy of cultivating technology startups around the world.

Bulgaria World Cup ski runs 'illegal': nature groups

SOFIA (AFP) - Alpine Skiing World Cup events in Bulgaria's southern resort of Bansko use illegal ski runs and break international regulations, a coalition of nature groups said on week-end.

"With close to 40 percent of the ski runs in Bansko being illegally built and operated, many fear this event has cast a shadow over the reputation of the FIS (International Ski Federation)," the For The Nature group said in a statement.

Checks by Bulgaria's environment and waters ministry last October showed that Bansko operator Yulen had expanded the 99.5 hectares (245 acres) of ski runs in its concession contract by another 65 hectares of state land.

But Environment Minister Nona Karadzhova said she "sees no reason to shut the ski runs" and suggested changes in Yulen's contract, allowing it to pay for the expanded runs.

For The Nature however warned that even if operating, Bansko "should not have been awarded the Alpine Ski World Cup."

The resort is located in the Pirin national park, a UNESCO nature heritage site, it added.

Bansko was hosting this weekend the women's World Cup downhill and super G after last weekend's men's giant slalom and slalom events.

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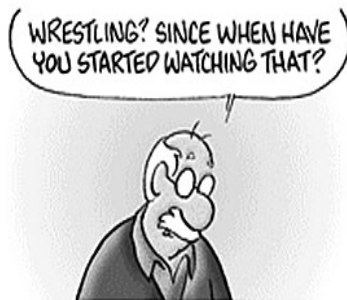
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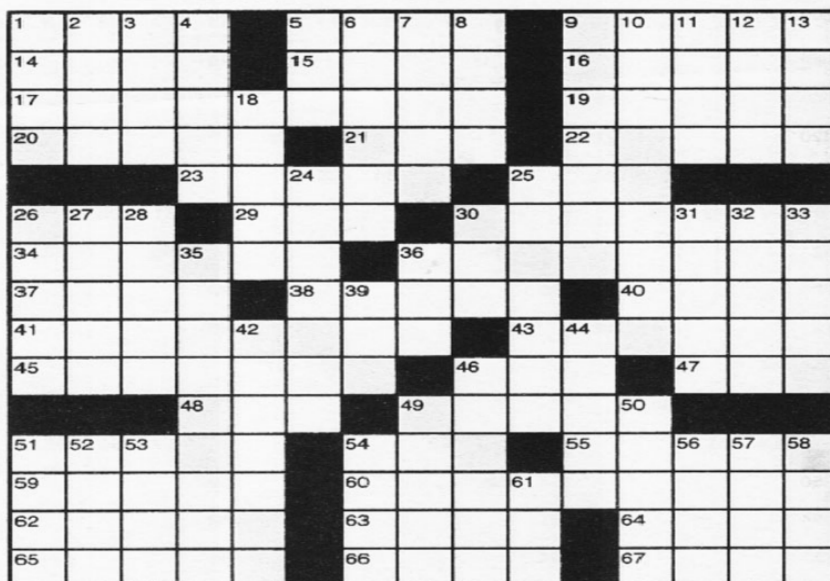
1. Atlas charts
5. Scrapped, at NASA
9. Southwestern brick
14. Exxon's predecessor
15. U-shaped pipe
16. Underneath
17. Well-arranged
19. Stage setting
20. Fable writer
21. ___-spot
22. Sounds of approval
23. Inflexibility
25. Dr. of the rap world
26. Ceiling
29. Rocky crag
30. Placates
34. Jubilant
36. "___ Injuries" (Scott Turow bestseller)
37. My fodder's house
38. 2002 bio-pic
40. Advocate
41. Sacred hymn
43. Able to move, as a cell
45. Did a double take
46. ___ se
47. Vigor
48. Sugar ___ Robinson
49. Rattler's weapon
51. One who revels in the revolting
54. Pod occupant
55. Model Campbell
59. Proportion
60. 2004 Will Ferrell movie
62. Wrong
63. German river

DOWN

1. Southwestern sight
2. Netman
3. Greek letters
4. Narcotic state
5. Ultimate degree
6. Speaker
7. Starer
8. Bid one club
9. Blots up
10. Gussied up
11. Olive genus
12. Underweight

13. Rams' dams
18. Ill will
24. Comedian Arthur
25. Heartwood of a tree
26. Labor activist Chavez
27. Swarming
28. Chafflike bract
30. But, to Cato
31. Tear
32. It landed on July 20, 1969
33. Nod off
35. Mr. Mapother's working name
36. Lindstrom or Zadora
39. Unburden
42. Puzzled
44. Maine university

46. Just dandy
49. Location
50. Part of Fifi's week
51. Actress Linda
52. Horse collar part
53. "Taxation without representation" coiner
54. "South ___" (Comedy Central hit)
56. It's a sign
57. Egyptian goddess of righteousness
58. Facts, for short
61. Clock units: abbr.



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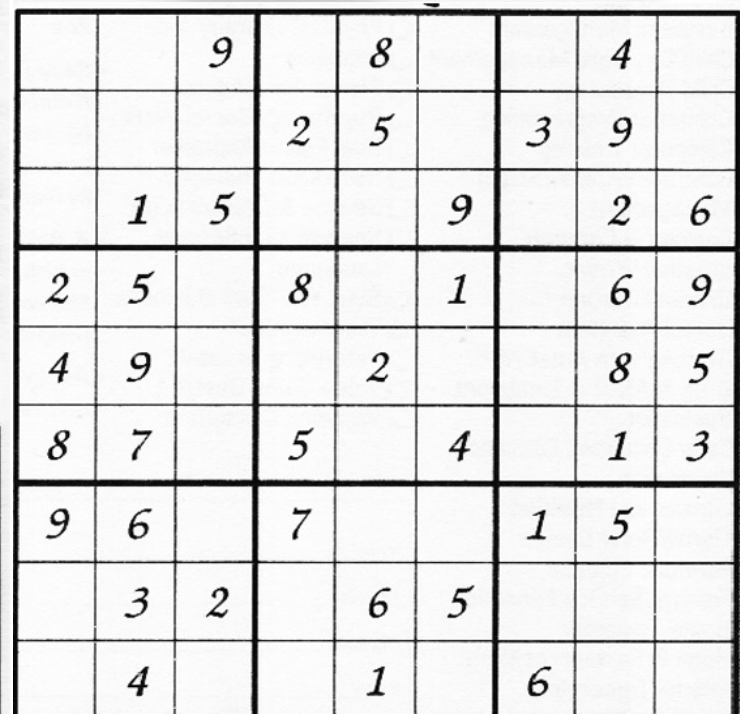
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8	4	6	5	9	7	2	1	3
1	5	1	2	4	8	9	6	7
5	1	2	7	6	5	9	4	8
5	8	4	2	9	1	6	7	3
6	9	7	1	4	8	5	2	3
9	2	8	6	7	5	1	4	3
1	6	5	4	2	7	9	8	3
4	7	5	9	8	1	6	2	3

Complete the grid so that every row and every column contains the numbers 1 through 9
A number is Never repeated in a row or column.
In addition every rectangle must contain the numbers 1 through 9



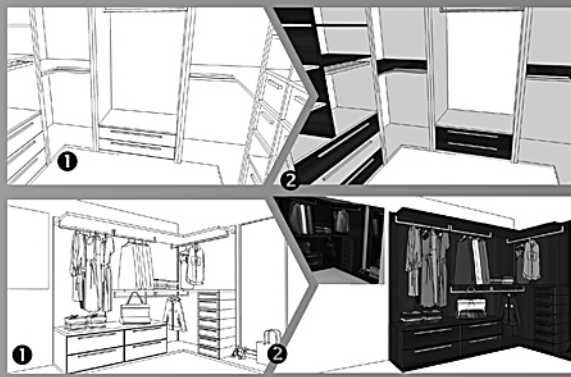
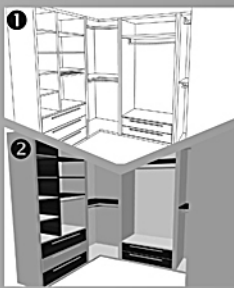
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G20 turns screws on Europe to combat crisis

MEXICO CITY (AFP) - Finance officials from the G20 leading and developing economies entered a second day of talks here Sunday split on how best to tackle Europe's debt crisis, which has dominated the gathering.

While hailing recent actions to fight the crisis, G20 members from outside the region were turning the screws on Europe to bolster its defenses further to prevent another outbreak of panic that would harm the global economy.

A senior official from a non-European country said the G20 was engaged in a tricky balancing act of putting gentle pressure on the Europeans without seeming over-demanding.

In addition to reinforcing "their firewall," Brazil's Finance Minister Guido Mantega called for the implementation of 2010 reforms that laid out a new system of quotas to increase the

voting power of emerging economies in the IMF's decision-making processes.

The final statement from the finance ministers and central bankers in Mexico City could explicitly set out the trade-off, a source said: more IMF cash from outside Europe if the region first puts its hand in its own pocket.

However, Germany, Europe's top economy and pay-

master, has so far steadfastly resisted calls -- from the United States, the IMF and others -- to boost its crisis-fighting war chest.

Finance Minister Wolfgang Schauble made no bones about Berlin's opposition saying ahead of the meeting it "doesn't make economic sense" to pour more money into rescue funds for debt-racked eurozone countries.

China's Huawei touts 'world's fastest smartphone'



BARCELONA (AFP) - Chinese telecoms giant Huawei on Sunday launched what it touted as the "world's fastest smartphone", in its bid to squeeze into a market currently dominated by Apple and Samsung.

"We are proud to ... introduce a world first at the 2012 Mobile World Congress with the Ascend D quad, the fastest smartphone," said Richard Yu, Huawei Device chairman, on the eve of the industry's

biggest fair in Barcelona.

The phone, which will be available from April, boasts a quad core processor, double that of smartphones which are using dual core at the moment, making them at least twice as rapid.

The phone's battery, for instance, lasts some 30 percent longer than the industry average, it is said.

It also comes with a technology cancelling out background noise on voicecalls and boasts a surround sound system, said the group.

Huawei was unable to give a retail price for the phone but Yu said it would be "15 percent more competitive than others of the same class".



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Finance

ECB prepares to open liquidity floodgates again

FRANKFURT (AFP) - The European Central Bank is preparing to flood eurozone banks with cheap money again this week in the second of two such operations aimed at preventing a credit crunch in the euro area.

In an unprecedented move last December, the ECB announced it would lend as much as banks wanted at an ultra-low interest rate of 1.0 percent for a period of three years so as to keep credit flowing in Europe at a time

when banks are increasingly wary of lending to each other in the current debt crisis.

In the end, some 523 banks lined up to borrow a record 489.2 billion euros (\$655 billion).

At the time, ECB chief Mario Draghi said that a second such three-year auction of funds -- known as a long-term refinancing operation or LTRO -- would be held on February 29 and he estimated that demand for the new cash would likely be just as strong.

Briefs...

Rising oil prices fuel piracy in oil-rich Gulf of Guinea

LAGOS (AFP) - The waters off West Africa's coast, the Gulf of Guinea, are a growing source of oil and have recently seen a spike in piracy for theft of its riches, a development seen to be fuelled partly by rising crude prices.

Attacks on vessels have grown in number and scope, spreading across a broader region in what is becoming a new piracy hotspot. Vessels carrying petroleum products have been the most targeted.

As oil prices hit nine-month highs this week, the leader of the small West Africa country of Togo called on the UN Security Council to create an international group to combat piracy.

The group could be styled along the lines of one battling pirates off Somalia on the eastern side of the continent.

Greece cannot imagine leaving eurozone: advisor

ATHENS (AFP) - Greece would face steep inflation, massive wage cuts and the destruction of currently healthy businesses if it quits the euro, a senior Greek economic advisor said in an interview published Sunday.

Hardouvelis comments came after German Interior Minister Hans-Peter Friedrich said Saturday that debt-stricken Greece should be given incentives to leave the eurozone, arguing such a move would improve its chances of becoming competitive again.

"Outside European monetary union, Greece's chances of regenerating itself and become competitive are definitely bigger than if it remained inside the eurozone," Friedrich said in an interview with news magazine Der Spiegel.

SATURDAY'S Crossword Answer

BOAT FREAK SLAW
ANNO CELLO HABA
HENRYCABBAGECOD
TIARA PAULA EYE
IKE MALI
CARDIGAN SACRED
ODE MORAL BALI
COOLASACUCUMBER
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World's oldest liquor collection a 'true passion'



Dutch businessman Bay van der Bunt, 63, checks a cognac

AMSTERDAM (AFP) - Forty years ago when Dutch businessman Bay van der Bunt bought his first two bottles of vintage cognac on a road-trip to France, little did he know it would be the start of a collection worth millions of euros today.

"Collecting old liquor never even crossed my mind back then," Van der Bunt, 63, told AFP as he uncorked an ancient-looking bottle, part of what is regarded as the largest collection of old liquors in the world -- now up for sale for a "mere" six million euros.

"Go ahead have a taste, this is an 1895 cognac from the house of A. E. Dor," he said, pouring the deep brown liquid into a snifter glass then holding it up to the light as the cellar filled with a musky, velvety aroma.

Van der Bunt wants to sell the collection in its entirety "otherwise its integrity will be compromised." And he has already received solid interest, notably from potential buyers from China and Russia, but has accepted no offers yet.

In the early 1970s, the businessman owned a small antiques shop, which frequently took him on trips to France to look for hidden gems in second-hand stores.

"But many times there were also old bottles of cognac or armagnac and I decided to buy these, not even thinking back then what it would one day become."

In 1978, his collection got its first major boost when Van der Bunt's father gave him a gift of some 100 bottles, "presents my dad received while running a small gardening service company" for the well-heeled in the area.

"My father said: 'You are out of your mind to collect liquor. Why don't you invest in something worthwhile?'

"Well, I didn't listen," he said smiling.

His collection has grown to more than 5,000 dusty bottles, kept safely behind lock and key in a converted cow shed at his rustic farmstead on the outskirts of the southern Dutch city of Breda.

The collection consists mainly of bottles of rare cognac and armagnac, distilled from French grapes, as well as a variety of ports, madeiras and rums.

Asked whether he preferred cognac or armagnac, Van der Bunt just laughed: "It's like asking a polygamist which one of his wives he loves the most."

The crown prince of the collection is undoubtedly a six-litre bottle of 1795 Leopold Brugerolle, bought at an auction by Christie's in 1990.

It is the last remaining hand-crafted bottle in the world that accompanied Napoleon Bonaparte's army on

its campaigns and is valued at 138,000 euros (182,000 dollars), according to Van der Bunt.

There's also three complete sets of eight bottles of A. E. Dor cognacs, dating from 1805, 1811, 1834, 1840, 1858, 1875, 1889 and 1893 and valued at between 70,000 to 80,000 euros per set.

Or a hand-blown bottle of 1789 Courvoisier & Curlier which will set a potential buyer back 49,000 euros, or an Armagnac Eau de Vie from the same year.

"The year of the French Revolution," Van der Bunt said proudly.

"I have even been approached by some of the cognac houses in France wanting to buy back their own historical product," he added.

By his own admittance, as his collection grew -- buying at auctions and stock from famous restaurants such as Maxim's in Paris -- so did his need to possess some of the old spirits in existence.

But after 40 years of passionate collecting, the Dutch businessman is now putting his collection up for sale.

"I promised my wife when she turns 65, I will sell the collection and we'll use the money to build a smaller house," Van der Bunt, who has no children, told AFP.

There will, however, be one bottle not for sale.

It's a 1780 Remy Martin, believed to be one of the world's oldest existing bottles of cognac, "a gift from my father".

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Taylor Swift declines prom, gives fan dream date instead

SOMERDALE — Country-pop star Taylor Swift said Friday she won't be able to accept a prom invitation from Kevin McGuire, a New Jersey teen undergoing treatment for leukemia, but offered to take him to an awards show instead.

In a message left on the Facebook page, Swift said, "Kevin, I'm so sorry but I won't be able to make it to your prom. But I was wondering, the ACM Awards are coming

up. Would you be my date?"

Representatives for Swift confirmed that the message was posted by the singer.

The invitation grew from a Facebook campaign launched by McGuire's sister, Victoria, who started up the Facebook page "Taylor Swift take KEVIN MCGUIRE TO PROM!" to persuade the singer to attend McGuire's prom at Sterling High School prom in Somerdale, N.J.

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Gold Coast Aruba: Great savings for large families on holiday rentals



Aruba's newest and most innovative gated community has enjoyed steady sales since breaking ground, as many are finding the secure surroundings and outstanding amenities are just what they were looking for before considering purchasing property on the island. Some owners are using the villas or town homes as vacation retreats rather than full time and are taking advantage of Gold Coast's rental services to turn their investment into ready income.

"The greater portion of home owners are using their 'home away from home' in Aruba to escape the winter months, or spend holidays with the family on the island," noted Gold Coast developer Fito Croes. To assist in the demand for more complete facilities for groups and families, famed hotelier Ed Malone has been placed in charge of the rental program.

Staying at Gold Coast is a very attractive proposition for those traveling with groups that would require multiple hotel rooms. Two and three bedroom Villas or Town Homes accommodate large numbers and offer extensive amenities along with a final cost resulting in considerable savings. The community is minutes to the best beaches and all the casino action, and offers a quiet and secluded getaway with two swimming pools and specialized services with more on the way, such as a fitness room, tennis courts and mini-mall. Ed can arrange maid service, babysitters, caterers, airline pick-up

and drop-off; they even boast a shopping service to stock your shelves before arrival.

Gold Coast accommodations are elegant and spacious, offering privacy for parents or a few couples.

high-speed fiber-optic Internet connection, individual washer/dryer, and are fully air-conditioned. Cribs, high chairs and hair dryers are available for a modest fee. Concierge services to arrange



Beautifully appointed kitchens and bathrooms grace each abode; barbecues and lounges are provided for friendly cookouts and truly savoring the island life. All homes come with cable TV,

rental cars, spa appointments, activities and restaurant reservations are all part of the package.

Check-in for your holiday escape is conducted in the comfort of your vacation home, not while waiting on line at check-in desk. In every way, Gold Coast seeks to pamper their guests while providing them with the feeling of being in a cozy community, not the normally bustling resort, particularly experienced during the major holidays. If you wish an optimal vacation experience with great savings, visit their website: www.goldcoastaruba.com to get acquainted with the community and the layout, details and availability of accommodations, or call 586-2200 to talk personally to a Gold Coast representative.



Visit the Mario Hernandez shop for the finest in Latin American designer accessories



Cashmir shawl with suede fringe and applique



casual wear, sturdy luggage and accessories

"It's all in the details," believes the owners of the Mario Hernandez shop in the Paseo Herencia Mall "The fine handcraftsmanship and classic styling of the Mario Hernandez accessories have placed them in high demand around the world, and we are proud to have the only MH store on Aruba."

The cozy little shop can be found tucked away just across from The Cinemas ticket booth, featuring fine quality leather goods with a trendy touch, the best of the current Mario Hernandez designer collection. It also features a stylish selection of the designer's logo unisex shirts and stunning silk scarves. Our personal favorite was a cashmere shawl with MH 25th anniversary Chrysalis motif in suede appliques; the look and feel of it is simply gorgeous. Shawls and scarves perfectly combine with the buttery leather handbags and accessories for an ensemble fashion statement.

The Mario Hernandez collection encompasses luggage, handbags and wallets of every sort, with specialized functions. "Our men's accessories

are extremely popular; literally flying off the shelves," note the owners. In the two years since they opened their doors, they have found patrons are very impressed with the quality and style of the goods.

Just a short time ago, the design house created an extremely attractive new line featuring the art of William DeBilzan, noted American artist whose work is often seen adorning the chic homes of television characters; he has popular galleries in both Florida and California and his work is exhibited in over 28 galleries across the U.S. and Europe.

Mario Hernandez has been creating and designing products for over 30 years; his name is synonymous with manufacturing excellence and innovation in design. The store in Paseo Herencia Mall in Palm Beach is opened until 10:00 PM for convenient night-time shopping and boasts the latest collection of these timelessly styled accessories, each of them handcrafted at the Bogotá factory.

by Rosalie Klein



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Ronaldo's magical backheel gives Real victory



MADRID (AFP) - Cristiano Ronaldo scored a wonderful, backheeled goal to give Real Madrid a 1-0 win over neighbours Rayo Vallecano on Sunday to extend their lead to 13 points over Barcelona at the top of La Liga.

The second half was eight minutes old when the Rayo defence failed to clear a corner at the first attempt.

Portuguese superstar Ronaldo, facing away from the goal, then backheeled the ball so powerfully from 15 yards out that it evaded at least four Rayo defenders on its way into the left hand corner of the net.

It was his 29th league goal of the season.

Barcelona can cut Real's lead back to 10 points later Sunday when they travel to Atletico Madrid.

Madrid coach Jose Mourinho admitted his team were fortunate to escape with victory.

The game was competitive throughout and the main talking point of a goalless first period was whether or not Madrid's Sergio Ramos had intentionally used an elbow to stop Diego Costa in the penalty area after already receiving a yellow card.

Ronaldo had shot danger-

ously on 24 minutes across the Rayo goal from the left hand side of the penalty area and a minute later he went close again with a right footed shot that narrowly missed the target.

Rayo chased, harried and reduced space all over the pitch and were close to taking a first half lead when Francisco Medina burst into the area and cracked a shot onto the underside of the crossbar on 38 minutes.

The second half started in

Mcllroy downs Westwood

continued from page 16



Rory McIlroy of Northern Ireland

It will be just the third Europe v United States title match in the 14-year history of the

much the same vein until Ronaldo's moment of magic in the 53rd minute.

Rayo's best chance to level the game fell to Miguel Perez 'Michu', who blazed the ball over the bar after a mistake from Ramos put him clear on goal.

On 75 minutes Real 'keeper Iker Casillas had to be at full stretch to stop a powerful drive from Daniel Armenteros.

Michu was unjustly sent-off with a minute remaining for a challenge on Sami Khedira in which he did not appear to make contact.

Earlier on Sunday Athletic Bilbao enhanced their Champions League prospects with a hard fought 2-2 draw at Villarreal.

Veteran midfielder Marcos Senna opened the scoring for Villarreal with a sweetly struck free-kick after 10 minutes, but Bilbao struck back with two second-half goals by Markel Susaeta and Spanish interna-

tional Fernando Llorente on 61 and 65 minutes.

The home team snatched a crucial point with a Nilmar goal two minutes later to move three points away from the rel-

egation zone.

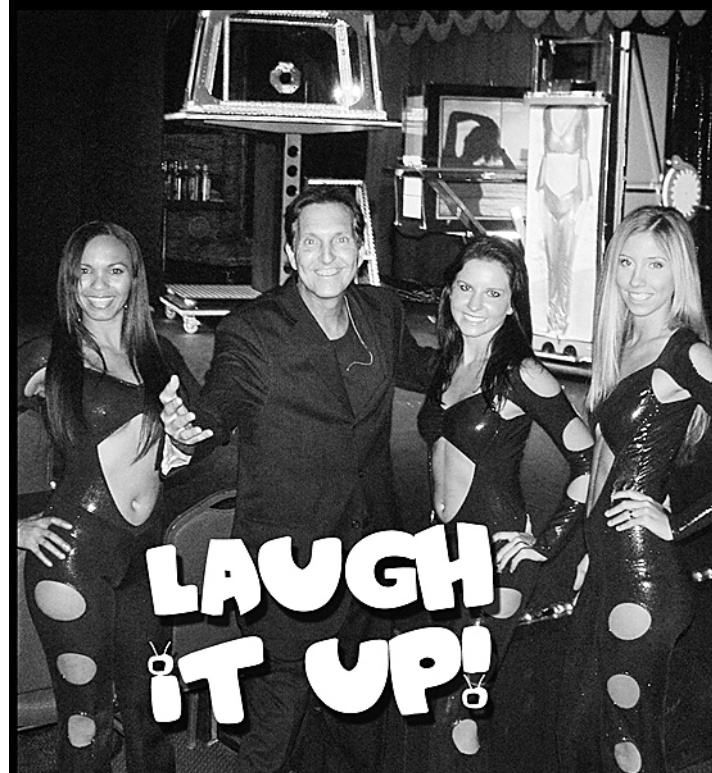
Bilbao stay fifth, one point behind Levante who currently hold fourth position and a Champions League classification for next season.

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Del Potro cruises to Marseille title



MARSEILLE (AFP)- Juan Martin Del Potro made up for his defeat in the Rotterdam final last Sunday by taking the Marseille event on Sunday for his 10th career title, defeating Frenchman Michael Llodra, 6-4, 6-4.

The number four seed, beaten by Roger Federer in the Netherlands last weekend, broke Llodra once in each set to wrap up the final victory in 83 minutes.

The Argentine increased his undefeated record against

the 2010 champion to a 3-0 mark, having also claimed their first-round encounter at Rotterdam last week.

Sunday's win was also Del Potro's first indoor crown, after finishing runner-up in his previous finals.

"I lost three finals indoors and I thought that I would never win one," said Del Potro, the 2009 US Open champion and who put out top seed Jo-Wilfried Tsonga in Saturday's semi-finals.

"This shows that I have progressed. On this surface I have beaten lots of good players.

"I am proud to win this title because at this moment it's very important for me and for my season."

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Shirt for the Dutch football team for the upcoming European Championships



AMSTERDAM - Wesley Sneijder revealed the new away strip in Amsterdam last week. Inter Milan's su-

perstar player called the design "spectacular" and "fantastic," which is hardly surprising as he was involved

in the design process.

According to clothing sponsor Nike, the Dutch team both commands respect and intimidates its opponents and the black kit will add to the team's presence because it

"has a powerful and authoritative aura." The traditional orange colour isn't missing either; the shirt has orange bands on the inside of the sleeves and an orange panel on the right shoulder.

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McIlroy downs Westwood to reach Match Play final

MARANA (AFP) - Rory McIlroy rallied from 3 down Sunday to beat Lee Westwood in the semi-finals of the World Golf Championships Match Play Championship and keep the world number one ranking in his sights.

Northern Ireland's McIlroy beat England's Westwood 3 and 1 to advance to a Sunday afternoon championship showdown with Hunter Mahan, who never trailed in his all-American duel against Mark Wilson and won 2 and 1.

Both McIlroy and Westwood had a chance to supplant England's Luke Donald atop the world rankings with a vic-

tory in the elite event at Dove Mountain.

Westwood seized the early advantage, winning three straight holes from the second to seize a 3 up lead.

McIlroy roared back, winning three of the next four holes to square the match, then winning the ninth to make the turn 1 up.

A fortuitous bounce on a cart path at the 11th helped McIlroy halve the hole with a par. He then won the next two holes to go 3 up, sinking a 25-foot birdie putt at 12.

"I thought 11 was the turning point, when he bounced it

off the cart path and got the halve," Westwood said.

At 13, Westwood's drive into the gallery found its way into the back of a woman spectator's sweater as she ducked to protect her head.

"Would you mind walking 250 yards forward," Westwood caddie Billy Foster quipped after they discovered the odd lie.

It was a rare moment of levity in an otherwise serious match, with little banter and few conceded putts.

Westwood pulled one back at 15 -- the first hole he'd won since the fourth, driving the green on the 321-yard hole and making his 18-footer.

But two holes later McIlroy closed it out with a par at 17, where Westwood missed his eight-footer.

"Great to be in the final," McIlroy said. "I played Hunter here three years ago and beat him on the final green."

Players had a lunch break before they were due out for the 18-hole championship match, which promised something of a Ryder Cup feel.

continues on page 14

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